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Jacqui Gosnold
William Read Primary School
Long Road
Canvey Island
SS8 0JE

Dear Mrs Gosnold

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to William Read Primary School, Essex

Following my visit to your school on 22 April 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report on the findings of my visit. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in February 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, I met with the headteacher, other school leaders, members of the Governing Body, a representative of the local authority and an education consultant who works with the school. I visited classrooms with the headteacher and talked to pupils in classrooms and in a meeting. I evaluated the school improvement plan and looked at other documents including records of lesson observations and school self-evaluation.

Context

Since the inspection in February 2013, there have been no changes to the staff or governors at the school. Several teachers are due to return from maternity leave and the school has several teaching vacancies that have yet to be filled with permanent staff.

Main findings

The school's improvement plan has been adapted to address the areas of improvement from the inspection that took place in February 2013. The planned actions are mainly appropriate and there are tight deadlines in place. The headteacher's comments about the progress the school has made do not always evaluate the impact of the actions the school has taken. Some of her comments record only what has taken place rather than how well it is making a difference.

The headteacher and other leaders observe teaching in lessons and provide feedback to teachers including targets for improvement. Some of this feedback is too generalised and is not specific enough to help teachers improve. The headteacher and other leaders are not considering all of the evidence of progress in order to gain a full picture of teaching over time. For instance, leaders do not look at evidence in books and pupils' progress data together with evidence from lesson observations to give a full and accurate picture of the quality of teaching.

The two deputy headteachers are helping to improve teaching through whole staff training and individual support. The school has trained teachers in how to use questions effectively to challenge pupils, for instance.

There are several teaching vacancies, which mean that the school remains in a vulnerable position. Governors are in the process of trying to recruit new teachers.

The governing body is becoming more effective in monitoring the work of the school and holding it to account. Governors have planned further training to ensure that all of them understand the achievement data so that they can ask questions that are more searching. Governors have drawn up their own appropriate action plan and have already made a good start, for example by looking at books to judge how well teachers mark them.

Senior leaders and governors have begun to take effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. Following the visit to the school, I recommend that further action is taken to:

- ensure that progress in books, pupils' achievement data and evidence from lesson observations is taken into consideration when judging the quality of teaching
- ensure that feedback to teachers is always helpful in showing them how to improve their teaching.

Ofsted will continue to monitor the school until its next section 5 inspection.

External support

The local authority has provided support for several newly qualified teachers to help improve their teaching. Two teachers are currently attending local authority training to improve their practice. The local authority has also trained teachers to teach phonics (the sounds letters make) effectively but more needs to be done to ensure that all teachers do this consistently well.

The school employs an external consultant to help improve leadership. This has helped leaders to judge lessons accurately.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Essex.

Yours sincerely

Michelle Winter
Her Majesty's Inspector